

and the entire wing being spread to the full, the abdominal and rump feathers fluffed out entirely like a puff-ball and the tail thrown well up over the back, the feathers slightly spread, his legs hanging stiffly below him as he sank back to his perch, singing loudly all the while. As soon as he touched down he again sidled up to his mate with his stiff, mincing gait. She submitted to him once again and immediately after copulation both birds suddenly took flight and disappeared from view over the factory roofs.

GUDUR P.O.,  
NELLORE DISTRICT,  
August 10, 1954.

K. M. KIRKPATRICK

19. THE OCCURRENCE OF FRANKLIN'S NIGHTJAR  
(*CAPRIMULGUS MONTICOLUS MONTICOLUS*) IN  
TRAVANCORE-COCHIN

Franklin's Nightjar has hitherto not been recorded as occurring in Travancore, and in Salim Ali's recent book 'The Birds of Travancore and Cochin' it merely gets an 'honourable mention'.

In February 1954 in order to definitely establish its identity I sent a specimen skin of a bird which I believed to be of this species to the Society and it was identified as a female. By a strange coincidence a day or two after I had received this information I picked up another bird of this species in an exhausted condition. This bird, a female, revived sufficiently to fly away after I had poured a few drops of water down its throat.

Franklin's Nightjar appears to be not uncommon in the Peermade Hills of Travancore during the dry weather months (November to April) for its distinctive call *choee* can frequently be heard near localities where there are expanses of slab rock surrounded by thin jungle and grassland. I have often seen and heard the male, identified by its white wing patches, uttering this call from the ground or perched in a tree or when in flight, but I have never heard the female do so.

I do not think that this nightjar remains in the area during the monsoon months, but further observation is necessary before this fact can be established.

NELLIKAI ESTATE,  
VANDIPERIYAR P.O.,  
T.-C. STATE,  
S. INDIA,  
May 2, 1954.

M. C. A. JACKSON

20. OCCURRENCE OF SPURS IN THE FEMALE  
JUNGLEFOWL (*GALLUS SONNERATI*)

In March 1949, Mr. R. F. Stoney sent in the skin of a female Junglefowl (*Gallus sonnerati*) shot at the foot of the Segur Ghat in the Nilgiris which is in normal plumage but has 1 inch spurs on each leg. Col. Phythian-Adams who was with Mr. Stoney sexed the bird by dissection.

Stuart Baker in 'Game Birds of India', Vol. III, p. 132, says of the female of the Red Junglefowl: 'undeveloped spurs are occasionally present. Tickell obtained such a specimen in Singhbhum, and I have myself shot half a dozen females showing spurs, which in one instance exceeded half an inch in length'.

There does not, however, appear to be any record of this having been observed earlier in the Grey Junglefowl.

EDITORS

## 21. THE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

In the *Journal* Vol. 51, page 276, Mr. F. H. B. Tyabji recorded having seen several hundred bustard together at one time. Subsequent correspondents expressed surprise at these observations as no one ever appeared to have recorded having seen the Great Indian Bustard in such large flocks. It is therefore interesting to quote from 'Records of Sport and Military Life in Western India' by the late Lieut-Colonel T. G. Fraser (1881), page 138:—

'On our arrival at the little ghat, across from M—m [Malegaum?] and descending to the plain, I drew B—d's attention to a fine bustard near the roadside, and two or three more further on. Getting our shot guns, we made towards them, but these wary gentlemen were not to be done so easily, and the manoeuvre of ringing could not be effected. As we approached they rose, and though too distant for effect, we both fired, and the moment we did so, in an instant from every direction around us rose flocks of bustard, till some eighty or a hundred were on wing at once. We were saved the humiliation and disgrace of seeing them fly unharmed away by a couple of them passing over us, one of which we brought down. Whether a flight of locusts or grasshoppers had alighted to attract this extraordinary flight of birds, or whether they assembled for migratory purposes, I cannot say, but never before or since have I witnessed such a sight.'

The period referred to is in the 1840's.

EDITORS

Col. R. W. Burton offers the following comment on above:—

'In view of the greater abundance of all species of game birds in India a century ago it is not very surprising that there is record of the Great Indian Bustard having been seen on one occasion in the Bombay Presidency in the 1840's in a large flock of 80 to 100 birds. That the occurrence was even then most unusual is known by the statement by Colonel Fraser in his book, ". . . never before or since have I witnessed such a sight"'.

What is most surprising is that in these days of the Bustard in India having become a vanishing species it should be reported that during the years 1923-1926 flocks of 200 to 400 bustard were seen along the Nizam's State Railway in the Manmad direction.

What can be the explanation? One large assembly recorded over a hundred years ago, and nothing of the kind until eighty years later